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A REGIONAL LIBRARY FOR ROXBURY

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
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BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Library

I. PLANNING

Before the proposed new branch library for the Dudley station area comes off the drawing board, we feel that its crucial that as many Roxbury residents and organizations (churches, neighborhood action groups, educational institutions, and organizations, Golden Age groups, parents, nursing home residents- in short, men, women, and children of all walks of life) should have the opportunity to discuss and voice their opinions and wishes as to the type of library and educational center to round out and modify the suggestions listed below. We feel that there are many people urgently looking for ways to develop the educational resources in this area and that these people could complement one another's activities.

II. CONTENTS AND ACTIVITIES

A. We believe that such a library should encompass all those materials and services that the public regional library traditionally offers:

- current books for all ages
- Newspapers
- filmstrips
- films, documentary and educational
- records - music and the spoken word
- bookmobiles manned with knowledgeable librarians to visit schools, public and private as well as headstart centers)
- study hours for children
- adult discussion groups
- lectures and courses
- summer programs
- exhibits of documents and rare books as well as art exhibits

Further we believe that all of these materials and services should give very great prominence to the area of African and Afro-American history, literature (including black history of South America) sociology, biography, art, etc.

B. In addition, we see that there is a need to expand these services to include the opportunity to hear live Afro-American and African music and dance and to see Afro-American and African art (possibly on loan from other centers).

C. We see the need for parents and teenagers to be trained to tell stories, to help man with the book mobiles, and to have space for special teenage activities, adult seminars, teacher seminars in Afro-American history, good commercial movies with black actors, as well as educational workshops.

III. ADMINISTRATION

We feel that any humanitarian or humanistic function carried on by a metropolitan or urban agency has to be concerned with the special needs and interests of particular neighborhood and cultural groups and needs to include representatives of these groups in regional library operations. We believe that the Boston Public Library has a special opportunity to set a much needed example to other city institutions. We therefore believe that the structure of a regional library should be such that there may be local citizens enrolled on

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ries of committees to help make book, film, record, and other types of sections as well as be active partners with the professional staff in planning activities.

IV. BUILDING STRUCTURE

We see the need for a building to be named after a person of great meaning to residents of Roxbury.

We see the need for a building which empasizes:

a. the African motif, as well as an external picturial history of Afro-American peoples;
b. glass walls so that exhibits look out and can be seen;
c. a building with a courtyard or arcade- possibly a building on stilts to allow for outside exhibits;
d. a building which could include space for a paper back bookshop, a coffee shop, possibly an African "boutique" to provide a place for people to congregate, a place which will provide full and part time employment and training in an educational environment for local residents;
e. a building that has a protected area for valuable documents, rare books, projectors, film screens, gifts, and special collections,especially microcarding of such collections as the Schonberg collections;
f. space for the more general public to read, study, browse, and borrow;
g. space for educational workshops, seminars, auditorium (Headstart parents and other educational organizations need such space. Dr. Asa Knowles of Northeastern University says that the University would be delighted to rent such space in a regional library for adult education courses. Wheelock college president also endorsed the need to rent such space so that their Headstart training program could function at least in part outside their own building which is not readily accessable to Roxbury or other Headstart parents).

We do not want a matchbox "storefront" as at Egleston or a "prison-like" structure like the Roxbury YMCA.

V. LOCATION

We believe that the Dudley station area is ideal - located as it is by a major transportation center connecting all parts of Boston, next to a major Roxbury shopping area, within minutes' walk of the New School for Children, the proposed new public campus High School at Madison Park, and the new proposed Munroe Trotter School; and within a few minutes bus ride from the Franklin Park Zoo, (where there have been proposals to make a model zoo and zoological study center).

VI. FUNDING

We would hope that the Regional Library regular funds might be supplemented by rent from large educational institutions, so that smaller organizations might be able to meet unoppressed by rents which they could not afford (and in a sense having already paid through taxes which educational institutions have not), and also supplemented by local donations, gifts from large companies, private charities, and federal funds.

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